



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

Each entrance to The Commons has a large hanging sign.



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

The Ithaca Commons has several kiosks that will be interactive when finished.



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

The wooden benches are placed on top of large sections of granite.



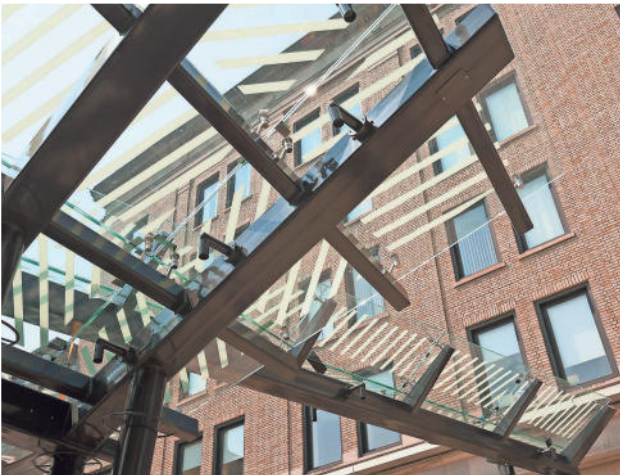
SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

There are two sorts of tables and chairs on the new Commons. These are moveable.



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

The garbage and recycling containers are solar powered.



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

The roof of the new Bernie Milton pavilion is not yet complete.



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

These chairs on the new Ithaca Commons rotate but are at a fixed location.



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

The masonry of the walkways are a nod to local architect Tony Egner



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

Some of the flower planters on the redesigned Commons are moveable.

# Features

Continued from Page 1A

ty and taste, letting the talent on the stage take over.

The ground dips, letting those close to the stage not obstruct the view of those behind them, while the rim allows those looking to stay away from the crowd a view from a more comfortable distance.

Some feared the pavilion's glass roof would offer terrible acoustics, while others said any sound crew worth its salt would find a way to work around it. Ithaca's new outdoor pavilion shattered doubts, just like a panel from the first roof they installed did.

Free concerts are scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursdays in the pavilion through Sept. 10 as part of the Outdoor Summer Concert Series.

Also, catch the 1978 movie "Grease" at the pavilion 8:30 p.m. Aug. 28 during the Commons Celebration.

## Smart trash cans

Though many lament the loss of certain aspects of the old Commons — such as the many trees — nobody misses the sight of trashcans overflowing with residential garbage.

With the new Bigbelly Trash Cans, not only is it quite difficult to wedge in a residential-sized trash bag, but they're also sustainable on the energy-use front, using solar power to compact the waste.

Though there are only five sets of the new trash receptacles — each set has a bin for recyclables and one for garbage — on the Commons, there isn't a lot of distance to walk between cans, so there's little excuse not to clean up the space for

## Commons celebration

**What:** The new Ithaca Commons celebration weekend.

**When:** Aug. 28 and Aug. 29.

**Where:** The Commons as well as West State Street, Press Bay Alley and Cayuga Street.

### Details of Aug. 28 events:

- » Noon: Official dedication ceremony on the Commons.
- » 1-1:30 p.m.: Giant ribbon-cutting ceremony on the Commons.
- » 1:45-8:30 p.m.: Live music on the Commons with Vitamin L, Caribe Jazz All Stars, The Blind Spots with The Kings of the Fall.
- » 8:30 p.m.: Outdoor screening of "Grease" at the Bernie Milton pavilion on the Commons.

other Commons users.

## Information kiosks

People are still waiting for these tall, dark brown, touchscreen slabs to become active information kiosks.

Once they are, the kiosks will put the Commons at the user's fingertips, providing a directory of the strip that tourists should find useful. Until then, the kiosks will serve as billboards for the Downtown Ithaca Alliance's Commons Celebration, set for Aug. 28-29.

Though the city can't legally sell advertising on the display screens, city Planning and Economic Development Director JoAnn Cornish said on July 7 the kiosks "will hopefully pay for themselves," with their impact for businesses around the city and county.

## Planters, benches, tables

### Details of Aug. 29 events:

- » Noon-6 p.m.: Family Fun Day on West State Street with live music by The Notorious, Stringbusters, Mutron Warriors, Thousands of One and Tony DeSare; Live music and DJ sets as well as beer, wine and food trucks and pop-up shops in Press Bay Alley; live music and street performers on Cayuga Street.
- » 12:30 p.m.: Dedication of the playground on the Commons.
- » 6 p.m.: Free screening of "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" at State Theatre.

### Both days

- » Merchant activities, walking tours and history exhibit, throughout downtown. Online: Downtownithaca.com.

The new Commons is more open than the last with a cleaner and sleeker look. Lining the cavernous expanse and mounted on blocks of stone are new wooden benches.

They aren't much for sleeping on as a railing goes right through their center. The hard wood benches aren't much for comfort either; there's little cover from the sun, making it more like a wood stove on a hot summer day.

But alongside each is a touch of nature, colorful flowers and healthy-looking green plants and, tying in with the growing optimism of the Commons, young saplings that may one day block out the baking sun.

## Pavers

Some walkers on the Commons may not have looked down long enough to notice the masonry of the walk, featuring artistic etchings and diagonal lines in-

laid in the stone, a nod to local architect Tony Egner, who planned the design layout for the original Commons using diagonal lines back in 1975.

## Playground

It takes a while for the Commons to wake up every day, but without fail, the most enthusiastic sign of life can usually be found on the new playground.

Though not a big space — the structure occupies only around 900 square feet — children can bounce, slide and climb while their parents sit on nearby benches.

The playground, though new, has its critics; though exceeding ADA guidelines, it has fallen short of some residents' expectations. Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick has pledged the playground will be evaluated for possible modifications.

## The Commons sign

The Commons project has been rife with complaints in the last two years. During that time, nothing has given Ithacans more ammunition than the new Commons signs on the east and west ends of the mall.

The sign facing Aurora Street is obstructed by traffic lights (an error that was well noted by locals). But many were surprised that when, as the second sign was lifted, the crane's hitch was released in a place that was, you guessed it, right behind the west side's traffic light.

The sign has its own tongue-in-cheek Twitter feed.

Follow Nick Reynolds on Twitter @IJ-CityWatch.